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But to return to our Bull of Bispham. It was the work of our artist soon after he settled in this city, and was painted, we believe, for the Century Club, where it now forms one of the most attractive features in that establishment. The Bull is one of those vicious, long-horned fellows, to be found, and avoided, on the Roman campagna—one who on the slightest freak of fancy, starts off at wild speed, followed by his cows, for a race of a hundred miles, and woe be to the foolhardy man who would strive to stay his flight. The Bull stands boldly out in the foreground, and gazes right at you. The *pose* is splendid, firm, erect and dauntless, a tower of strength, and conscious of immense vitality and power. The drawing of the Bull is masterly; the frame work is massive, and the thews and sinews and muscles, seem quivering with imminent action under the skin, which reveals their presence. The slightly curved body, so finely foreshortened, affords an admirable contrast of shadow, and the whole form stands out in bold and vigorous relief. There is nothing fluffy about this Bull; from hoof to horns it is all solid; the hair covers flesh, and the horns are horns; in short, you could guess its weight within a few pounds. It is a living bull in a live landscape; the atmosphere is transparent, and the rank grass and herbage are touched in with a daring freedom which seems half carelessness, but which after all is true to the facts, and is far more effective than foregrounds painted with laborious finish. The picture at once commands attention by its positive realism, and the more you gaze, the more potent is the magnetism which its reality exerts. It is unquestionably a great picture—a strong, masculine and vigorous thought; executed with the boldness of conscious power, and a strength of effect, which would utterly eclipse a whole gallery of the thin, timid, milk-and-water compositions which seem to weaken the walls upon which they are hung. Mr. Bispham has not been taught to husband the pigments, as though every brush full of color was a Shrewsbury oyster less for the painter. He has a wealth of color, which gives a depth and richness of tone, and a solidity to the objects, and a strength to the effects, while the boldness of his outline, and the anatomical correctness of his details, prove the closeness of his study and his perfect mastery of his subject. Added to this, we recognize the presence of thought, of the exertive, animating faculty, from which spring pictures which must make a mark upon the epoch.

In the sketches and unfinished pictures of Mr. Bispham, we recognize the same boldness of thought, the same strong individuality and the same dramatic effect, all tending to one end, power. It is impossible to forecast a career, but the exhibition of such marked intellectual powers at so early an age, would seem to predicate for him a high position among the first animal painters in the world. There is no point beyond his reach, if he is true to himself, and as he has extraordinary vital force, his career can hardly fail to redound to the honor of his country and his Art.

In the same building we found a young sculptor, H. J. Ellicott, whose works give evidence of a genius that cannot fail soon to make its mark. He possesses keen intelligence, a warm enthusiasm, and a skillful cunning of hand. His last work is a small bust of Charles Dickens, which is admirable not only for its striking likeness, its marked

individuality and its justness of expression, but for its bold, careful and delicate modeling. It is just such a bust as every one would like to have of Dickens, for it is life-like and is of a size suitable for every library. It is now being cast, and copies will be ready in a few days. It will assuredly command a large sale, not only from the popularity of the subject, but from the intrinsic merit of the work.

MADAME LA GRANGE IN ORATORIO.

It is now positively known that Madame La Grange will very shortly make her debut in Oratorio music, in Handel's Messiah and in English. We learn that she takes the most lively interest in the subject, and that she has mastered the pronunciation with far greater facility than she expected. With the music of that sublime work she is deeply impressed, and those who have had the good fortune to hear her, say that she sings it with positive inspiration, and that her interpretation of it will surpass that of any singer since the time of Mrs. Wood. Her "Rejoice Greatly" is said to be positively electrifying. We confess to a growing curiosity and a great desire to hear her, a desire which we believe will be shared by the whole community. The Oratorio will be produced by Max Strakosch, under the competent direction of George W. Morgan, but where we are not as yet informed.

CORRESPONDENCE.

January 10th, 1868.

DEAR MR. WATSON:

My last letter bore you a Merry Christmas; this one carries with it a New Year's greeting. As this letter is dated in the midst of the holiday season, I have many festivities to record. Last week, I heard *Le Trouvere* at the grand opera, with the beautiful Madame Sars as Leonora, and her impersonation of the passionate Spanish maiden was certainly the finest I have ever seen. Manrico (Morrè) did not especially interest me, although he is considered a very fine artist—so fine, indeed, that to him was intrusted the chief rôle in *Don Carlos*; but a few weeks longer, and that character will receive new *éclat* from the magnificent voice and superb *personnel* of our charming Mazzolini. The Conte di Luna failed to evoke any sympathy from me, being quite insignificant in every respect; even the old familiar favorite "Balén" aroused no enthusiasm from the audience, perhaps because it seemed quite unsuited to the register of his voice, the notes lingering in his throat and manifesting a strange reluctance to leave it, so that the song was quite inaudible. But Mlle. Bloch was as ever, a perfect Azucena, and with the admirable orchestra, under the direction of the renowned Hainl, and the fine choruses, the *ensemble* was very enjoyable. After this four act opera, the magnificent ballet, *La Source*, was given. This ballet is considered the finest that has yet been represented at the Grand Opera; the music is quite bewitching, and the scenery and *danseuses* are perfection. *La Source* was revived for the gala representations given at the Opera for the Czar and the Sultan, and surely if it be correct to admire a ballet, this one is truly admirable. The hero of the piece quite won my heart with his handsome face and expressive pantomime; of course, he was too grand to

dance. The piece opens with a moonlight dance by fairies near the magic "source," a beautiful fountain that gleams silver-hued under the moonbeams—a low, wild, witching strain is played, and the fairies run out and dance upon the enchanted turf. The effect of the child-fairies, little darlings of six and eight in their rose-colored dresses and delicate purple wings, was exquisitely *ravissant*.

A night or two ago, I went to the Théâtre du Chatelet, the largest theatre in Paris, where the new spectacle of "Les Voyages de Gulliver," was given. This spectacle I found very amusing, if not a little startling. The costumes were very much in the style of the "Devil's Auction"; young ladies disporting in dresses à la centaur, danced and skipped about in a very cheerful manner, and finally pranced fiercely off the stage. The music of this piece as well as the heroine, is taken from the "Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein," the beautiful Mlle. Schneider having yielded to the persuasion of fabulous sums, and accepted the rôle of Diane, the sweetheart of Gulliver. Schneider is the pet of Paris; she is a beauty, a very talented actress, and has the most charming light soprano voice imaginable. She completely bewitched me; she is a *vraie coquette*, and is adored by all the Parisians. Every sovereign who came to Paris during the Exposition, rushed to the Variétés to see this enchanting being, and I presume you all know in New York that even the great Russian Czar spent his first evening in Paris listening to the Grande Duchesse. I have heard that the bewitching Schneider is *forty*, but I cannot believe it—the other evening she did not look a day over seventeen.

One of the most charming entertainments which I have recently enjoyed, is a soirée musicale given by Mr. Haner. This talented American artist resides in the Boulevard Haussmann, a broad, beautiful new avenue, *près* the sombre-visaged Madeleine. His apartments are pleasant and spacious, and without being luxurious have an air of artistic elegance that make them the fit abode of a bachelor artist. The night of Mr. Haner's first soirée was lugubrious with mud and sleet, and the city lights usually so bright and dazzling were obscured by this tempestuous blackness. Whether this night gloom heightened the brilliance within the artist's saloon I know not, but the effect as one entered was more like a dream-scene than reality. The grand salon is unique in form—not angular, but somewhat crescent-shaped—and there are five high cut windows hung in simple white drapery, which softens as it disperses the astral lights. I remember no vulgar display of the upholsterer's taste, but in the centre of the room stood an Erard concert grand, and near it its modest accompaniment, a lovely toned parlor piano. There were few pictures on the walls, but busts of Beethoven, Mozart, Meyerbeer and other pet idols of the musical soul were artistically dispersed about the salon. Now, I fear that I shall fail to convey to your mind anything of the poetic beauty of this scene: imagine beautiful women attired in every lovely tint that an evening toilette commands, their heads, necks, and arms sparkling with jewels that are only rivalled by the sparkling brilliance of their eyes,—men upon whose faces music has left its refining trace:—delicate flowers as votive offerings placed under the gleaming busts of the great composers, and over all a *lustre doré* depending from the frescoed ceiling, and lighted with wax tapers